
**Recommended Federal Grant Guidance
Public Safety Communications & Interoperability Grants
December 2005**

I. Introduction

One of the major issues facing the Emergency Services Sector is the inability of emergency service workers, including traditional “first responders,” to communicate with one another when the need arises. These emergency first responders have long been defined as the “first arriving organized responders with the capability and mission to contain, mitigate, and resolve the emergency at hand.” Their effective and efficient emergency response requires coordination, communication, and sharing of vital information among numerous public safety agencies. As the *National Strategy for the Physical Protection of Critical Infrastructures and Key Assets* observes, “Most systems supporting emergency response personnel, however, have been specifically developed and implemented with respect to the unique needs of each agency.” Such specification without regard to the need for interoperability tends to complicate the ability of those agencies to effectively communicate with others in the future—a problem echoed by the public safety community in the National Task Force on Interoperability report *Why Can’t We Talk? Working Together To Bridge the Communications Gap To Save Lives*.

In line with the needs of public safety and the national strategy, federal Fiscal Year 2006 Appropriations make grant funding available to improve the effectiveness of public safety communications systems and to resolve interoperability shortfalls. By definition, communications interoperability refers to the ability of public safety agencies to talk across disciplines and jurisdictions via radio communications systems and to exchange voice and/or data with one another on demand, in real time, when needed, and as authorized. The federal program offices recognize that many law enforcement, fire service, emergency medical service, and other emergency response personnel currently lack effective and modern communication systems within their respective organizations. The programs support the need to improve those systems so long as the improvement planning includes a vision for improved interoperability with other agencies. Additionally, the programs require emergency response agencies developing systems to improve communications and interoperability to ensure that their solutions are compliant with the concepts, processes, and protocols set forth in the Department of Homeland Security’s (DHS) National Incident Management System (NIMS).

In an effort to coordinate the way in which funding is allocated and to maximize the prospects for interoperable communications, some general grant criteria have been developed in concert with representatives of the public safety community. What follows is an outline of grant applicant eligibility, purposes for grant fund usage, and guidelines for implementing a wireless communications system.

This document provides general criteria relating to public safety communications grants, suggested considerations based on the lifecycle of public safety communications projects, and further criteria specific to block grants allocated to states as well as additional guidelines, examples, and resources for improving public safety communications and interoperability.



II. General Public Safety Communications Related Grant Criteria

A. Who Should be Involved with Public Safety Communications Interoperability

Federal funds that are allocated for improving public safety communications and interoperability should only be provided to public safety agencies or organizations at the regional, state, local, or tribal level. This includes:

- Emergency Medical Services (EMS) agencies
- Fire Service agencies
- Law Enforcement agencies
- An organization representing the aforementioned agencies

B. Lifecycle of Public Safety Communications Projects

While applying for equipment grants, applications should be capable of addressing each of the following aspects within the lifecycle of public safety communications:

- *Planning* for public safety communication systems
- *Designing* public safety communication systems
- *Building* public safety communication systems
- *Developing* operational and technical policies and procedures
- *Upgrading/enhancing* public safety communication systems and equipment
- *Replacing* public safety communication systems and equipment
- *Maintaining* public safety communication systems and equipment
- *Training* public safety staff on procedures for interagency communications
- *Exercising* public safety procedures and systems
- *Using* public safety interoperability solutions regularly to ensure ongoing familiarity
- *Managing* public safety communications projects

C. Common Public Safety Communications Goals

Grants will be awarded to applicants that aim to achieve the following goals identified and supported by the public safety community and each grant-making agency.

- Applicants should provide a clear and measurable plan for communications interoperability between first responders of regional, state, local, and tribal public safety agencies or other partnering agencies or organizations from federal, regional, state, local, and tribal jurisdictions, particularly in times of natural disaster and major criminal or terrorist acts. Measurable means the goals and objectives of the plan, wherever possible, are quantifiable, and the plan reflects how it contributes to achieving interoperable communications for the grant recipient and for the Nation.



- Applicants should demonstrate how funds would be used to upgrade or enhance “mission critical” networks with interoperable communications equipment for everyday use to ensure the safety and well-being of first responders and the public they serve. The National Task Force on Interoperability defined mission critical as “Transmissions necessary for the preservation of life and property.” The Final Report of the Public Safety Wireless Advisory Committee adds further clarification: “A mission critical communication is that which must be immediate, ubiquitous, reliable, and, in most cases, secure. Mission critical communications require the highest level of assurance that the message will immediately be transmitted and received regardless of the location of the operating units within the designed coverage area.”

D. Common Criteria for All Grant Applicants

In order to receive funding, the applicant must be able to convey an understanding of the first responder needs and a clear path towards interoperability. Each grant application must explain how the proposed project would fit into an overall effort to increase interoperability. Even if the funding sought is only for a piece of an interoperability endeavor (i.e., training for staff, procurement of new equipment), an executive summary should be provided to illustrate the broader context of the agency/jurisdiction’s interoperability plans. Such an explanation could include information on the governance structure overseeing the effort; a communications system plan; a deployment plan; an operations, maintenance, and training plan; and a financial plan.

At a minimum, the applicant must:

- Define the vision, goals, and objectives of what the applicant is ultimately trying to accomplish and how the proposed project would fit into an overall effort to increase interoperability, including integration into regional and state plans/strategies.
- Describe the specific problems or needs that are to be addressed.
- Identify any potential partners and their roles and staffing requirements, and provide information on any existing agreements such as a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or Mutual Response Agreement.
- Propose a detailed budget and timeline.
- Include an operational plan that addresses how the effort will be funded now and in the future.

Section IV of this document provides a thorough list of questions that applicants can use to help ensure that they have both taken the needs of public safety and potential partners into account and considered short- and long-term goals.

E. Standards

When procuring equipment for communication system development and expansion, a standards-based approach should be used to begin migration to multi-jurisdictional and multi-disciplinary interoperability. Specifically, all new voice systems should be compatible with the Project 25 (P25) suite of standards. This recommendation is intended for government-owned or -leased land mobile public safety radio equipment, and its purpose is to make sure that such equipment or systems are capable of interoperating with other public safety land mobile equipment or systems. It is not intended



to apply to commercial services that offer other types of interoperability solutions and does not exclude any application if it demonstrates that the system or equipment being proposed will lead to enhanced interoperability.

With input from the user community, these standards have been developed to allow for backward compatibility with existing digital and analog systems and to provide for interoperability in future systems. The FCC has chosen the P25 suite of standards for voice and low-moderate speed data interoperability in the new nationwide 700 MHz frequency band, and the Integrated Wireless Network (IWN) of the U.S. Justice and Treasury Departments has chosen the P25 suite of standards for their new radio equipment. P25 has also been endorsed by the U.S. Department of Defense for Land Mobile Radio (LMR) systems.

However, the first priority of federal funding for improving public safety communications is to provide basic, operable communications within a department with safety as the overriding consideration. Funding requests by agencies to replace or add radio equipment to an existing non-P25 system will be considered if there is an explanation as to how their radio selection will allow for improving interoperability or eventual migration to interoperable systems. This guidance does not preclude funding of non-P25 equipment when there are compelling reasons for using other solutions. Absent these compelling reasons, SAFECOM intends that P25 equipment will be preferred for digital systems to which the standard applies.

F. Governance

There needs to be consistent leadership and management to ensure that the planning, equipment procurement, training, and funding are in place when developing a public safety communications improvement or interoperability project. A common governing structure should improve the policies, processes, and procedures of any major project by enhancing communication, coordination, and cooperation; establishing guidelines and principles; and reducing any internal turf battles. This group should consist of federal, state, local, and tribal entities as well as representatives from all pertinent public safety disciplines. Frequently, when multiple agencies/jurisdictions are involved, this management is in the form of a governing body that makes decisions, solicits funding, and oversees the implementation of an interoperability initiative.

III. Criteria Specific to Block Grant Recipients

A. State Requirements

In order to ensure federal funds are spent efficiently and in service of strategic cross-jurisdictional and cross-disciplinary coordination and interoperability, states receiving federal funding for improving public safety communications and interoperability should prepare statewide interoperability plans. In order to be most effective and in alignment with the SAFECOM “practitioner driven” philosophy, these plans should be developed with input from local public safety agencies and take into account the unique communications needs, challenges, and existing infrastructure specific to that state. Those grant-making authorities who have established a statewide planning requirement with their grantees



should review these plans according to their grant criteria and then provide the plans to the DHS Office for Interoperability and Compatibility's SAFECOM Program.

B. National Incident Management System Compliance

The NIMS was created by DHS to provide a consistent nationwide approach for all levels of government to work together effectively and efficiently to prepare for, prevent, respond to, and recover from domestic incidents, regardless of cause, size, or complexity.

Homeland Security Presidential Directive (HSPD) 5 requires that all federal departments and agencies adopt the NIMS and begin to integrate it into their activities and programs to the fullest extent possible, including in their support to state, local, and tribal entities. FY06 grant applicants are encouraged to demonstrate NIMS integration in their plans, if possible.

Effective communications and information management during an incident are dependant upon a common operating picture, accessible across jurisdictions and functional agencies, and common communications and data standards to assure accessibility and interoperability. A common operating picture allows incident managers at all levels to make effective, consistent decisions expeditiously and ensures consistency at all levels of incident management. Common communications and data standards are fundamental to an effective implementation of NIMS. A link to the NIMS is provided in the Section VII, Resources.

C. Incident Level Communications Capabilities

Agencies applying for federal funding related to public safety communications and interoperability are encouraged to consider plans that enable them to achieve, at a minimum, incident level interoperability. This means ensuring the ability of incident operations section staff to adequately communicate with one another and their respective command centers within one hour of an incident. Agencies are encouraged to explore any and all inexpensive and innovative ways to ensure incident level interoperability. While such incident management interoperability can provide an interim resolution to an area's interoperability needs, such solutions should always be in support of long-term interoperability by building upon or accelerating long-term strategies and efforts.

D. Sharing Information on Interoperability Solutions

In order to promote cross-jurisdictional coordination and information sharing, regions and jurisdictions receiving funding for public safety communications and interoperability through block grants from the states are encouraged to provide information¹ regarding the amount of money received and the ways in which the funding is spent. Information to be provided includes:

- The amount of funding received for communications interoperability
- The entity receiving the grant funding
- Additional jurisdictions involved in coordination
- The timeline for the grant funding

¹ Information should be provided to the grant-making authority when state plans are submitted. The grant making authority should submit plans to the SAFECOM Program for review.



- The ways that the federal funding was spent, including:
 - ▣ Planning
 - ▣ Training
 - ▣ Equipment
 - ▣ Exercises
 - ▣ Promoting routine follow-on usage

This information will inform and update a comprehensive national strategy to ensure that grant funding is used most efficiently.

IV. Additional Criteria for All Public Safety Communications Grants Based on the Lifecycle of Public Safety Communications Projects

Planning for, building, upgrading, enhancing, replacing, maintaining, training staff, and managing projects for a public safety communications system are arduous tasks that require both short- and long-term strategies. Whether it is the development of a technical plan, training exercise, or system upgrade, any effort that ultimately leads to improved interoperability must include participation from all of the relevant agencies, jurisdictions, or other organizations that contribute to an effective emergency response.

This participation is frequently exhibited through a governing structure that improves the process of any major project by enhancing communication, coordination, and cooperation; establishing guidelines and principles; and reducing any internal turf battles. This group should consist of federal, state, local, and tribal entities as well as representatives from all pertinent public safety disciplines.

Answers to the following questions will help provide the applicant with a fuller vision of how the proposed project or effort will ultimately improve interoperability. Sections addressing the building, upgrading, enhancing, replacing phases of the lifecycle have been grouped together as they address needs and recommendations specific to public safety communications equipment.

A. Planning for Public Safety Communication Systems

There are three types of planning for public safety communications: operational, technical, and governance. Operational planning for public safety communications projects includes defining standard operating procedures, training/exercises, and regular use for the equipment. Technical planning for public safety communications projects may include needs and requirements assessments, development of the system network architecture, propagation studies, and similar technical proposals. Governance planning for public safety interoperability projects may include development of needs assessments, strategic plans, and financial plans. Questions that an applicant for communication systems planning funds should address are listed below.

The following questions will provide the grant-making agencies with an understanding of the applicants planning efforts.



Has the applicant considered the communication needs and requirements of its public safety community?

- With whom does the agency/jurisdiction need to communicate?
- How does the agency/jurisdiction need to communicate?
- What information needs to be exchanged?
- When does the agency/jurisdiction need to communicate and exchange information (i.e., daily, weekly, infrequently)?
- Under what circumstances does the agency/jurisdiction need to communicate (i.e., frequently occurring emergencies, major crimes or incidents, large-scale disasters)?

Does the applicant plan to include nearby agencies/jurisdictions from other disciplines or other federal, state, local, or tribal partners in its planning effort?

- Who are the stakeholders that need to be involved in the planning?
- Which decision makers should be involved in planning?
- What type of technical and field expertise will be needed to develop the plan?
- Will outside expertise be needed to develop this plan?
- What are the roles and responsibilities of all agencies that are involved? (Include a list of partnering agencies.)
- Are there any mutual response agreements in place?
- What type of governing structure exists to improve the processes involved in executing any planned project?

Does the potential plan take into account both short- and long-term goals?

- What should be done in the first phase (most critical)?
- How many phases will the plan require?
- How much time is needed to accomplish the plan?
- What are the technical solutions available to address the problem?
- What funding is available to address the problem?
Grant funds (federal, state, local, private), General funds

B. Building, Upgrading, Enhancing, Replacing, and Maintaining Public Safety Communications Systems and Equipment

Public safety interoperable communication grants can be used to build, upgrade, enhance, or replace communications equipment. Communication systems and equipment are expensive, and before a procurement decision is made, there must be an assessment of the current communication system and future needs. Additionally, funds should be directed at the improvement of existing systems, where applicable, rather than at the development of completely new infrastructure using proprietary equipment.

The following questions provide guidance for fulfilling public safety communications goals.

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Has the applicant already completed a plan that illustrates the agency/jurisdiction's commitment to the aforementioned public safety priorities?

- Please provide an executive summary that clearly illustrates how the proposed effort will lead to enhanced public safety communications interoperability.
- What type of multi-jurisdictional or multi-disciplinary agreements does the agency possess (i.e., MOUs, interstate compacts, mutual response agreements)?

Has the applicant considered public safety's operational needs of the communications equipment?

- In what type of topography/terrain does the agency operate?
- In what types of structures does the agency need to communicate (i.e., tunnels, high-rise buildings)?
- What methods of communication does the agency use (i.e., e-mail, paging, cellular calls, portable radio communications)?
- What is the process for dispatching calls?
- Is the communications center independently owned and operated by the agency? Does it serve several public safety agencies in the jurisdiction? Is it a multi-agency, multi-jurisdictional facility?
- Does the agency have the ability to patch across channels? If so, how many patches can be simultaneously set up? Is a dispatcher required to set up and break the patches down?
- What is the primary radio language used by the agency when communicating with other agencies or organizations (i.e., 'plain' English, code)?
- What types of equipment can immediately be deployed to provide short-term solutions for improved communications?

Has the applicant considered the system requirements to ensure interoperability with systems used by other disciplines or other levels of government?

- What type of equipment is currently used by the agency?
- Is there a regional, multi-jurisdictional, or statewide system in place that requires interoperability in order to communicate with other agencies? If so, how will the applicant interoperate/connect to that system?
- Is the equipment compatible with the P25 suite of standards?
- For data-related systems, is the applicant using XML standards?
- How scalable is the system? Can it be used locally between agencies and jurisdictions, statewide, and at a multi-state or national level?
- What internal and external security requirements exist in the architecture to secure information and maintain privacy levels for data as required by law?
- Is the infrastructure shared with any other agency or organization? Is it owned or leased?
- Does the agency use analog or digital radio systems or both?
- Is the system conventional or trunked?
- Which radio frequencies are used to communicate with other public safety agencies?
- How many channels does the agency have solely designated for communicating with other agencies?



Has the applicant considered a plan for backup communications capabilities in the event that the primary communications systems are significantly damaged or otherwise unable to function?

- Will equipment caches be in place?
- Are survey teams available for quick deployment to assess damages?
- Who will lead the effort?

C. Training Public Safety Staff on Issues Related to Emergency Response Communications

For equipment to be used properly and effectively in emergency situations, Emergency Service personnel must be trained through joint exercises that afford them the ability to practice standard operating procedures, become familiar with the equipment, and enhance their capacity and preparedness to respond to all types of emergencies. Eligible applicants should exhibit multi-disciplinary and multi-jurisdictional training in their overall public safety communications plan.

Do the applicant's training plans include exercises with other agencies/jurisdictions?

- Do the agency's training plans include participation from all levels and functions of emergency response (i.e., federal, state, local, fire, law enforcement, emergency medical services)?
- How often will training take place?
- Who will conduct the training?
- Where will the training be held? Will it be onsite or at a specified training facility?
- What maintenance efforts will exist to keep personnel up to date with changes in procedure, equipment functions, or other relevant policies?
- How will lessons learned from training exercises be applied to operational procedures? Will there be post-exercise evaluations or analyses?

D. Managing Public Safety Communications Projects

There needs to be consistent leadership and management to ensure that the planning, equipment procurement, training, and funding are in place when developing a public safety communications improvement or interoperability project. Frequently, when multiple agencies/jurisdictions are involved, this management is in the form of a governing body that makes decisions, solicits funding, and oversees the implementation of an interoperability initiative. Organizations that govern such projects must be comprised of the relevant law enforcement, fire, and emergency agencies in order to qualify for grant awards.

Is the communications project consistent with similar efforts in the region?

- Does the applicant have agreements in place with other agencies/jurisdictions that illustrate the cooperative and interoperable approach to managing the communications improvement or interoperability project?

Does the project have the support of the relevant governing body (state or local authority)?

- What other funding sources has the applicant sought for the ongoing administrative costs of program management?



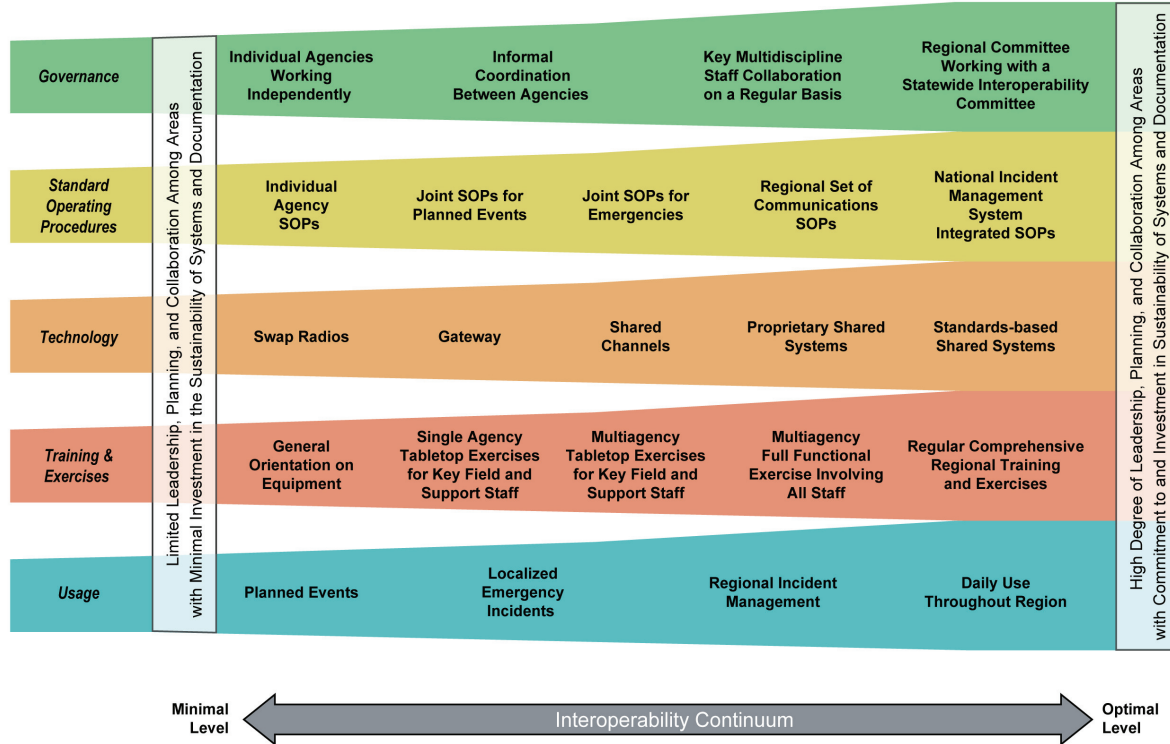
E. Using Public Safety Emergency Response Communications Solutions

No matter the level of management, planning, technology, standard operating procedures and training that is adopted by an agency, interoperability solutions must be routinely used so that agency staff is familiar with the equipment and procedures. Emergency response personnel in high stress situations revert to using equipment and procedures that they are familiar with and are comfortable using. Thus, unless both operable and interoperable communications solutions are used as part of routine operations every day (as applicable), they will not be used during major incidents. Just as with an agency's general staff, its supervisors and command staff must likewise be familiar with the equipment and protocols required to use the various communications solutions that are available to the agency if they are going to direct its activation; the best way to enforce this familiarity is through daily use of solutions.

V. Additional Guidelines for Implementing a Wireless Communications System

As an additional resource for any agency or region addressing communications and interoperability needs of its public safety community, the Interoperability Continuum is designed to help the public safety community and federal, state, local, and tribal policy makers address critical elements for success as they plan and implement interoperability solutions. The Continuum highlights that a number of different elements are essential to success, including frequency of use of the interoperable communications, governance, standard operating procedures, technology, and training/exercises.

Movement along all elements of the Continuum is crucial as all elements are interdependent.



To drive progress on the Continuum and improve interoperability, public safety practitioners should:

- Gain leadership commitment from all disciplines (law enforcement, fire, EMS)
- Foster collaboration across disciplines through leadership support
- Interface with policy makers to gain leadership commitment and resource support
- Use interoperability solutions on a regular basis
- Ensure collaboration and coordination across all elements (frequency of use, governance, standard operating procedures, technology, training/exercises)

More detailed information on the Interoperability Continuum can be found on the SAFECOM Web site at <http://www.safecomprogram.gov>.

VI. Generic Examples of Linking Disparate Public Safety Communications Systems

There are multiple approaches for linking disparate networks. Descriptions of common technologies are provided below.

A. Cross band/In-Band Repeater Gateways

Although there are more robust solutions available today, repeaters still provide improved interoperability for agencies needing to link disparate systems.

Cross band/in-band repeater gateways instantly retransmit signals input from one channel/system to another. These may be in the same or a different frequency band. Cross band repeaters range from simple devices supporting frequency transfers across two channels/bands (e.g., ultra high frequency



[UHF] and very high frequency [VHF]) to more complex devices capable of bridging multiple frequency channels/systems/bands (e.g., UHF, VHF Low Band, VHF High Band, and 800 MHz). Within minutes after arriving on the scene of an incident, a portable gateway can be quickly programmed to support the frequencies of participating agency radios. Some of these solutions also allow access to disparate systems via the Public Switched Telephone Network (PSTN).

B. Network-to-Network Gateways

Numerous initiatives are already underway to implement short-term integration technologies that provide a reasonable level of interoperability among disparate networks.

Network-to-network gateways provide radio interoperability during missions requiring communications between diverse organizations using different systems and technologies across multiple frequency bands. Network-to-network gateways offer a standard way to link wireless infrastructures. These gateways are usually at fixed locations and often support the passing of more advanced features such as unit ID between participating systems. As with the prior solution, many of these gateways allow access to disparate systems via the PSTN, as well as to share data.

Minimum specifications have been developed for instances where gateway (either cross band/in-band or network-to-network) solutions are to be implemented. Where such interconnect devices are to be used, the following specifications should be followed:

- Operating Modes
 - ▣ The device must be able to retransmit the audio of radios that operate in different parts of the radio spectrum, use different modulation and access techniques, and use analog or digital encoding. The audio shall be distributed or switched throughout a shared audio distribution bus, where it can be presented to and shared among all or a selected subset of radios interfaced to the device.
- Capacity
 - ▣ The device must support a minimum of four LMR in different operating modes. The ability to support cellular phones and connection to PSTN is desirable.
- Power Sources and Physical Features
 - ▣ The device must be capable of being powered either from vehicular power, battery power, or portable AC power sources.
 - ▣ The device must accommodate being rack mounted or standing alone in a portable enclosure. The device must be able to withstand shock and vibration typically encountered in field operations activity.
 - ▣ The device must include documented cable specifications for audio (speaker and microphone) and control (push-to-talk, or PTT) in order to interface with the basic audio and transmit controls for standard off-the-shelf LMR manufacturers' subscriber units that are typically employed by public safety.
 - ▣ The device must have input mechanisms or modules that can support balanced or unbalanced two- or four-wire circuits.
 - ▣ The device must have input mechanisms or modules that can transmit (TX) audio, receive (RX) audio, PTT, and Carrier Operated Relay/Carrier Operated Squelch (COR/COS) signaling. Ability for supporting Tone Remote Control (TRC) and Voice



Operated Transmit (VOX) signaling is desirable. Some form of adjustable automatic gain control should be provided for each device interface.

- Control and Administration
 - ▣ The device must provide local control to establish two or more talk groups of the radios/phone interfaces that are provided.
 - ▣ The device must provide adjustable audio/PTT delay to the radio interfaces to allow the supported radios and associated infrastructure to reach full transmit power and to accommodate unknown repeater operating parameters such as hang times and squelch trails.
 - ▣ The device must be easily configurable with short set up times.

C. Console Interfaced Gateways

Similar to fixed network-to-network gateways, some consoles provide similar support either manually or electronically.

Console interfaced gateways (i.e., “patches”) route audio signals from one channel or system to other channels and/or systems through a dispatch console, either by dispatcher intervention or by a pre-wired configuration through the console electronics, thereby supporting direct connections between disparate systems.

D. Shared Networks

Many states and regions have significant investments in large-scale, shared networks, briefly described below. These networks offer a high degree of interoperability within their geographic coverage areas and can be linked to other networks through network-to-network gateways. Some of these networks meet the P25 suite of standards.

Shared networks have common backbone infrastructures and interfaces. These are often single vendor solutions covering large geographic areas and/or commercial networks. The typical model calls for participating jurisdictions to purchase subscriber radios compatible with the network and to pay a monthly service fee.

VII. Resources

Additional information for applicants to use when constructing their grant applications and for seeking additional funding sources can be obtained at the following Web sites.

Association of Public Safety Communications Officials – International, Inc. (APCO) APCO is a not-for-profit professional organization dedicated to the enhancement of public safety communications.
<http://www.apcointl.org/>

Bureau of Justice Assistance Local Law Enforcement Block Grants (LLEBG) Funds from the LLEBG Program may be used for procuring equipment, technology, and other material directly related to basic law enforcement functions.
<http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/BJA/>



CommTech (Communications Technology, formerly AGILE) The CommTech Program within the Office of Science and Technology at the National Institute of Justice has a mission to assist state and local law enforcement agencies to effectively and efficiently communicate with one another across agency and jurisdictional boundaries. It is dedicated to studying interoperability options and making valuable information available to law enforcement, firefighters, and emergency technicians.

<http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij/topics/commtech/>

COPS Interoperable Communications Technology Program This grant program, administered by the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS), provides equipment funding to law enforcement agencies to enhance multi-jurisdictional public safety interoperable communications and information sharing across the Nation.

<http://www.cops.usdoj.gov/>

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) This site offers information on federal disaster assistance and funding.

<http://www.fema.gov/>

Grants.Gov This site offers a unified interface for all agencies to announce their grant opportunities and for all grant applicants to find and apply for those opportunities.

<http://www.grants.gov/>

Interoperable Communications Technical Assistance Program (ICTAP) A key component in achieving interoperable communications across the Nation is providing onsite technical assistance to states and urban areas. The Office of State and Local Government Coordination and Preparedness (SLGCP) funds ICTAP, a technical assistance program designed to enhance interoperable communications between federal, state, and local first responders and public safety officials. The program provides free support to states and urban areas with the goal of enabling local public safety officials to communicate across disciplines and jurisdictions via radio communications systems, exchanging voice and/or data with one another. http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/odp/ta_ictap.htm

Justice Technology Information Network (JUSTNET) The official Web site for the National Law Enforcement and Corrections Technology Center system, JUSTNET lists many grants and funding sources and contains various publications on communications interoperability issues.

<http://www.justnet.org/>

National Incident Management System (NIMS) NIMS, created by DHS, is the Nation's first standardized management plan that creates a unified structure for federal, state, and local lines of government for incident response.

<http://www.fema.gov/nims>

National Institute of Justice (NIJ) NIJ is the research and development agency of the U.S. Department of Justice and is the only federal agency solely dedicated to researching crime control and justice issues. This page lists the most recent solicitations issued by NIJ.

<http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij/>



National Public Safety Telecommunications Council (NPSTC) NPSTC is a federation of associations representing public safety telecommunications. NPSTC serves as a resource and advocate for public safety telecommunications issues.

<http://www.npstc.org/index.jsp>

National Task Force on Interoperability (NTFI) Recognizing that solutions to the national problem of public safety communications interoperability could only be achieved through cooperation between all levels of government, 18 national associations representing state and local government and public safety officials formed a task force to address this issue. NTFI's recommendations have been published in the form of a brochure, guide, and supplemental resources.

<http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij/topics/commtech/ntfi/welcome.html>

National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) NTIA, an agency of the Department of Commerce, works to spur innovation, encourage competition, help create jobs, and provide consumers with more choices and better quality telecommunications products and services at lower prices.

<http://www.ntia.doc.gov/>

Office for Domestic Preparedness (ODP) Equipment Grant Program The goal of the ODP Equipment Grant Program is to provide funding to enhance the capacity of state and local jurisdictions to respond to, and mitigate the consequences of, incidents of domestic terrorism involving the use of a Weapon of Mass Destruction (WMD). Communications equipment is included on the authorized equipment purchase lists for these ODP grants.

<http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/odp/>

Office for Domestic Preparedness (ODP) Homeland Security Grant Program (HSGP) ODP's HSGP provides a single application kit and program guidance for the State Homeland Security Program (SHSP), the Urban Areas Security Initiative (UASI), the Law Enforcement Terrorism Prevention Program (LETPP), the Citizen Corps Program (CCP), the Emergency Management Performance Grants (EMPG), and the Metropolitan Medical Response System (MMRS) Program Grants.

<http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/odp/>

Office of Justice Programs (OJP) Information Technology Initiatives The OJP Information Technology Initiatives Web site offers access to timely and useful information on the information sharing process, initiatives, and technological developments. The funding section of this site provides information on both federal and private funding sources, examples of innovative funding ideas, and tips on researching funding legislation.

<http://www.it.ojp.gov/>

Office of Justice Programs (OJP) Office of Science and Technology (OST) OST manages technology research and development, development of technical standards, equipment testing, forensic sciences capacity building programs, and technology assistance to Federal, State, and local criminal justice and public safety agencies.

http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij/about_sci.htm



Office of National Drug Control Policy, Counterdrug Technology Assessment Center (CTAC) Technology Transfer Program The CTAC Technology Transfer Program assists state and local law enforcement agencies in obtaining the necessary equipment and training for counterdrug deployments and operations.

<http://www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov/>

SAFECON Program SAFECON is the communications program of the Office of Interoperability and Compatibility (OIC), which resides in the Office of Systems Engineering and Development, Science and Technology Directorate, DHS. SAFECON provides development, testing, evaluation, guidance, research and assistance for federal, state, local, and tribal public safety agencies working to improve public safety response through more effective and efficient interoperable wireless communications.

<http://www.safecomprogram.gov/>

Technology Opportunities Program (TOP) The Technology Opportunities Program (TOP) from the National Telecommunications and Information Administration gives grants for model projects demonstrating innovative uses of network technology.

<http://www.ntia.doc.gov/top/>

U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) A cornerstone of the DHS philosophy revolves around a commitment to partner closely with other federal agencies, state and local governments, first responders, and law enforcement entities to ensure the security of the United States. Its Web site explains how DHS and local governments can work together.

<http://www.dhs.gov/>

U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) DOJ offers funding opportunities to conduct research, to support law enforcement activities in state and local jurisdictions, to provide training and technical assistance, and to implement programs that improve the criminal justice system.

<http://www.usdoj.gov/>

U.S. Fire Administration Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program The purpose of this program is to award one-year grants directly to fire departments of a state to enhance their abilities with respect to fire and fire-related hazards.

<http://www.usfa.fema.gov/fire-service/grants/afgp/grants.shtm>